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SPECIAL CONCERTS SERIES

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present

MISHA DICHTER
piano

Sunday, January 28, 1979

In 1966 pianist Misha Dichter was hailed by the world press when he triumphed at the prestigious Tchaikowsky International Piano Competition in Moscow. In the early 1970's he established himself as one of America's leading young artists, inspiring Newsweek's Hubert Saal to write that he was "the best of the new breed of pianists." And today the thirty-three-year-old virtuoso is busier than ever, having become one of the most sought-after pianists on the international concert scene.

Among the highlights of Misha Dichter's last season were performances as piano soloist with the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, Montreal Symphony, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Zurich Tonhalle. He also gave a three-concert series at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and a chamber music concert at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

In addition, his first three albums for Philips Records devoted to Beethoven, Schumann and Liszt were released to high critical acclaim, and a one-hour documentary film of his life was completed. This season Dichter continues his concert schedule performing as piano soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony and the San Francisco Symphony.

Mr. Dichter resides in New York City with his wife, Brazilian pianist, Cipa, and their two sons, Gabriel and Alexander. Misha and Cipa met when they were both students at Juilliard, and this season, as in the past, they will give several duo-piano concerts in the United States and Europe.

**Next Event: Sunday, February 4, 1979 — ORFORD STRING QUARTET,
3 p.m., Walter Hall.**

**Next Special Concerts Series Performance: Sunday, March 18, 1979,
VICTOR BRAUN, baritone**

Steinway piano

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Six Variations in F Major, Op. 34

Ludwig van Beethoven

Haydn, Mozart and their contemporaries in the latter part of the 18th century have left us numerous sets of variations. These variations are consistently unpretentious in form. The reason for this can be found in the nature of the form itself which derived from the practice of improvising on a well-known melody – often a folk melody or an excerpt from a popular stage work. The qualities valued in the variation form, just as in an improvisation, are spontaneity and the charm of the unexpected, rather than organic growth and musical architecture.

Beethoven wrote many sets of variations conforming to this pattern – many of them inventive and certainly worthy of our attention. But he also wrote a number of experimental sets which transcend this model. Opus 34 was his first attempt to make more of the variation form. Here, instead of the usual, and, at times, monotonous tonal structure, Beethoven employs a different key for each new variation, each key being a third lower than its predecessor. And, instead of a typically light and playful style, the texture here is in Beethoven's richest and most luxuriant keyboard style. Certainly there is no attempt at the gigantic and cohesive structure of his much later Diabelli Variations of 1824. Instead, this is a work of great warmth and directness.

Fantasy in C Major, Op. 15 “Der Wanderer” (D.760)

Franz Schubert

Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo

Adagio

Presto

Allegro

Schubert's Fantasy occupies a unique place – not only within the piano works of this prolific composer, but also within the whole spectrum of the keyboard literature. It is unique both in its structure and in its use of the instrument. Structurally, the work anticipates the symphonic poem of the late 19th century in its use of a leitmotif to bind the work together (D. F. Tovey called it “the earliest and best of all symphonic poems”). The composition is in four movements corresponding to the four movements of the classical symphony – a first movement allegro, an adagio, a

scherzo (with Trio) and a finale (although the movements follow one after the other with only a short pause between each). The adagio is a theme and variations – the theme taken from the composer's song "Der Wanderer". It is the opening motive from this theme which constitutes the raw material for the whole work. But it is also a work of astonishing virtuosity. The kind of orchestral sonorities which Schubert succeeded in writing in this work were not really matched until Liszt. The final movement of this Fantasy begins fugally but soon breaks off into passagework which depends for its effect on the brilliance of the keyboard writing (which is considerable) and on the ability of the performer to meet its demands (which are very considerable). As a summing up of a work of such variety, depth and immensity, this virtuosic ending is entirely appropriate.

INTERMISSION

Sonata in B Minor (1853) (In one movement)

Franz Liszt

(Dedicated to Schumann)

Lento assai – Allegro energico – Grandioso – Andante sostenuto –
Allegro energico

We can be quite certain that Liszt knew Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy intimately as he created a masterful transcription of it for piano and orchestra. Perhaps this is what inspired him to write a one-movement sonata using common themes throughout. In this case there are four themes which are transformed and combined in a rhapsodic manner. As in Schubert's work, there are sections corresponding to the four movements of a symphony but they are woven together much more completely. Like Schubert's work, the sonata begins its last section with a fugue but in this case it is much more elaborate. The work ends with a coda restating the four themes.

Liszt's reputation continues to fluctuate but the reputation of the B minor Sonata does not. Its position as one of the great masterpieces of the 19th century remains unchallenged.

Notes by Bruce Vogt